

REFUGE IN ILLINOIS

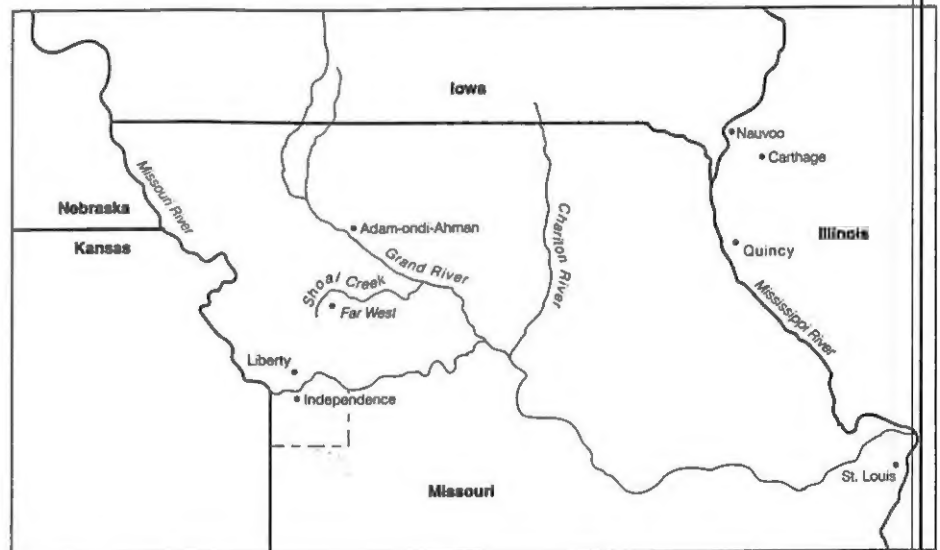
Time Line

Date	Significant Event
26 Jan. 1839	Committee on Removal was organized by Brigham Young
Feb. 1839	Large-scale migration from Missouri began
22 Mar. 1839	Joseph Smith wrote from Liberty Jail urging Saints not to scatter
22 Apr. 1839	Joseph Smith arrived in Quincy, Illinois, after months of imprisonment in Missouri
30 Apr. 1839	Joseph Smith negotiated land purchases in both Iowa and Illinois
22 July 1839	A "day of God's power" was manifested in many healings in Nauvoo and Montrose
Nov. 1839	Joseph Smith met with President Martin Van Buren in Washington, D.C.
16 Dec. 1839	The Nauvoo Charter was signed in Springfield, Illinois
1 Feb. 1841	John C. Bennett was elected the first mayor of Nauvoo

► Options were limited as the Saints were driven from Missouri from the fall of 1838 into the spring of 1839. The most attractive possibility was to return east. For economic, political, and humanitarian reasons, Illinois initially welcomed the refugees.

SOME PEOPLE SAW the flight from Missouri as evidence that the Lord had forsaken the Saints. The Prophet Joseph was in Liberty Jail with no prospect of release. Whatever hope the Saints had of regaining political rights and property in Missouri or establishing the city of Zion was dimmed. Even some Church members questioned the wisdom of gathering the Saints again into one location.

Where were the Church members to go for refuge? The vast Indian tracts to the west were not open to settlers. Iowa to the north was sparsely settled but offered little timber upon its vast, rolling plains. Going south meant traveling through hostile Missouri communities. The route east was most familiar and reassuring to Church members. Many of the Saints had traveled it only months before in exile from Kirtland. Now some of them were considering a return to Ohio. Crossing the Mississippi and pausing in some of the small Illinois communities along its bank, however, provided the respite necessary for the Saints to receive new direction from Church leaders.



RESETTLEMENT OF THE SAINTS

The months following the surrender of Far West severely tested the leadership of the Church. The entire First Presidency—Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith—were in jail. The ranks of the Quorum of the Twelve had been thinned. David W. Patten had been killed in the Battle of

Crooked River, Parley P. Pratt was in Richmond Jail, and his brother Orson was with a group of Saints in St. Louis. Thomas B. Marsh, William Smith, and Orson Hyde were disaffected with the Church and consequently were of no help. Therefore the responsibility of overseeing the needs of the Church during the winter of 1838–39 and throughout the exodus from Missouri to Illinois fell mostly upon Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. John Taylor was called to the apostleship in December 1838. Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith were added the following April; both of these men were able to provide valuable assistance during this critical time.

Church leaders delayed as long as possible the decision to leave Missouri, hoping that the legislature would revoke Governor Boggs's extermination order. They sent numerous petitions to state officials and to the legislature requesting them to let the Saints remain in their homes, but their pleas were ignored.

Meanwhile the Missourians grew impatient with the lingering Saints. In early 1839 Church leaders became convinced that their people could no longer hope to remain in Missouri. On 26 January, Brigham Young had created the Committee on Removal to facilitate the exodus. Throughout the winter and spring this committee arranged to feed, clothe, and transport the poor. By formal resolution nearly four hundred Latter-day Saints covenanted to place all of their available property at the disposal of the committee "for the purpose of providing means for the removing from this state of the poor and destitute who shall be considered worthy, till there shall not be one left who desires to remove from the state."¹ Even Joseph Smith somehow sent one hundred dollars from Liberty Jail to assist the effort.

By mid-February conditions were such that a large scale migration of the Saints began. Wagons and teams, although not of the best quality, had been acquired; food reserves were in place along the migration route; and there was a temporary break in the weather. Nevertheless, leaving Missouri was not easy for the refugees. Many people sold precious possessions and lands at unreasonably low prices to obtain means to flee the state. One Missourian bought forty acres of good land from a Church member for a "blind mare and a clock." Some other tracts of land sold for only fifty cents per acre.² Some people with oxen teams made several trips between Caldwell County and the Mississippi River, two hundred miles to the east, to convey friends and relatives out of danger. Amanda Smith, widowed at Haun's Mill, and her five children left Far West by ox team. Once her family was beyond the reach of the Missouri mobs she sent her team back to help other Saints in their trek eastward.

Charles C. Rich fled Missouri sometime in November to avoid arrest for his involvement in the Battle of Crooked River. He left behind his twenty-three-year-old wife, Sarah, who finally was able to leave Far West with the help of her father, John Pea. Her health was poor, and she was confined to a wagon bed for the entire journey to the Mississippi. She was accompanied



Charles C. Rich (1809–83) joined the Church in 1832. He assumed command at the Battle of Crooked River when David W. Patten was mortally wounded. He was a military and Church leader during the Nauvoo period. Brigham Young assigned him to preside over the temporary settlement of Mount Pisgah in Iowa in the winter of 1846–47.

He was ordained an Apostle on 12 February 1849. In the spring of 1864 he became one of the first settlers in Bear Lake Valley (Idaho and Utah) and was responsible for the settlement of that region. He was known for his goodness, generosity, and physical strength. He often carried the mail across the mountains to Salt Lake City during the winter when roads were blocked.

by Hosea Stout's wife, Samantha. Once there they found the ice breaking up and the crossing extremely hazardous. George Grant voluntarily braved the ice floes to carry a message to their husbands. As he neared the Illinois shore, he fell through what had appeared to be solid ice. He was, however, rescued.

Charles C. Rich and Hosea Stout, upon hearing that their wives had arrived, crossed the river in a canoe to meet them. The next morning they decided it would be best to bring Sarah, who was about to have her first child, and two other women to the Illinois side. They were forced by lack of space to leave Sarah's father to wait for the ferry. On the return journey huge blocks of ice threatened to crush the small canoe. Occasionally the men jumped onto the ice to push the craft out of danger. Meanwhile, Sarah's father, watching with tear-filled eyes, saw the party's safe arrival on the Illinois side.³

For Emma Smith, the months after Joseph's arrest were especially trying. In February 1839 a neighbor, Jonathan Holman, helped her place her four children and her meager belongings into a straw-lined wagon pulled by two horses. On the evening prior to her departure she received from Miss Ann Scott the priceless manuscripts of her husband's "translation" of the Bible. James Mulholland, the Prophet's secretary, had given the papers to Ann for safekeeping thinking that the mob might not search a woman. Ann had made two cotton bags to hold the documents. Emma used these same cotton bags to carry the manuscripts from Missouri to Illinois, tying them under her long skirt.

When the party arrived at the Mississippi they found the river frozen over. Rather than risk the weight of the wagon, Emma walked across the ice holding two children, with the other clinging to her skirt. They finally arrived safely at the outskirts of the village of Quincy, Illinois, where Emma lived until Joseph's release.

ARRIVAL IN QUINCY

Until mid-spring 1839 Church leaders who were not in jail had no definite plan for where the Saints should settle. Word reached the leaders that the citizens of Illinois were sympathetic to their plight and would welcome the Saints. Many people in Illinois believed that a large influx of Mormons would help their struggling economy. The state's politicians also encouraged immigration because Illinois was nearly equally divided between the Whigs and Democrats. Each party hoped to attract the large Mormon vote.

Benevolent residents in Quincy, a community of twelve hundred, were generous and sympathetic to the plight of the exiles. Many of them opened their homes and provided jobs. They collected money, food, clothing, and other necessities on more than one occasion. The Democratic Association of Quincy was particularly instrumental in assisting the Saints. It convened